

THE

לְשָׁכָה

SHEKEL



VOLUME XLVI, No. 6, NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2013

The Numismatic Legacy of the

Dead Sea Scrolls



- *Holy Moses! Prophet depicted on many medals*
- *AINA 2014 medal: Sylvia Haffner Magnus*
- *Bank of Israel's Visitor Center*
- *Service organization Daughters in Israel*

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The American Israel Numismatic Association (AINA) was founded in 1968 as a non-profit educational organization dedicated to the study and appreciation of Israel's numismatics, past and present, and all aspects of Judaic numismatics. More information is available on our web site www.theshekel.org. Articles and Letters to the Editor are invited to be submitted to *The Shekel* Editor Andrew Perala. Advertisers: Annual ad rates are \$750 for a full page and \$200 for 1/5 page; please contact Mel Wacks.

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NOVEMBER DECEMBER 2013
ANDREW PERALA, EDITOR

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THANKS!

I recently spent a couple of weeks at Goldberg Auctioneers, where I cataloged portions of extensive Israel/Judaic collections assembled by two AINA members - David Gursky and Sam Rosen - which will soon be auctioned, with the proceeds going to their families.

David Gursky was a long-time friend, and I recently had the pleasure of meeting Sam and Selma, along with their son Mark, for the first time.

All of these are people with a deep love for Israel, and they bought coins and state medals in part to support Israel, as I believe do most of our members. They also wanted to have their

children and grandchildren eventually benefit from the sale of their collections, and that too is the desire of most collectors.

David and Sam spent countless hours examining their coins and medals, reflecting the pleasure we all receive from looking at and researching the precious items in our collections. And that pleasure multiplies when we can share our hobby with our family and friends. I suggest that you all share your hobby and pass

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

along the stories of the Jewish people and the Holy Land to future genera-



Sam, Life Member 234, and Selma Rosen and Family.



*David Gursky,
Member 9708.*

tions. Even though many items in this upcoming auction are rare, there are also numerous lots that are quite affordable. You can find out for yourself by reviewing the contents of Goldberg's January 26-29, 2014 sale on www.goldbergcoins.com or call 800-978-2646 to obtain an illustrated catalog.

Whenever you are considering selling your treasured coins, medals, etc. I can highly recommend our three longtime advertisers: Goldberg Auctioneers, Heritage Auctions, and William Rosenblum Rare Coins.

I wish all of our members a Happy New Year, and many more years of enjoying our numismatic hobby. ☞

Mel

Number One Money Man Judaica

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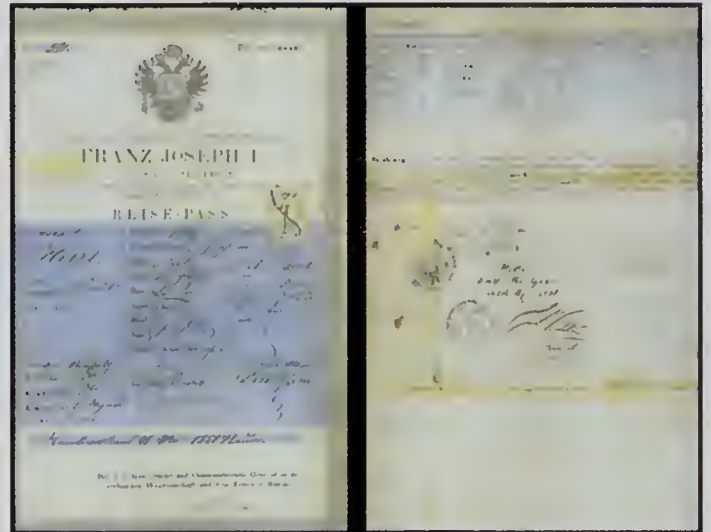
High relief silver medal (45 grams - 40mm) commemorates 50th anniversary of Danish Jewish community escape from the clutches of Germans. Created by Danish artist, engraver and medalist Bent Jensen, this piece features a reverse of Holger Danske, a national hero, and an obverse with Jews between the maps of Denmark and Sweden.

Houghton

Works of Art from Houghton Jews - Hardcover Christie's London, 8 December 1994. Edition provides extensive information about Philip & Sybil Sassoon and their magnificent holdings. 361pp; near perfect condition; no folds, notations or markings. Unopened.



Herzl Passport



1850 Franz Joseph I official passport for Israel Herzl (24x40 cm). Sealed with signed revenue stamp, dated 1850. In 1815, Austria emerged from Napoleonic Wars as a powerhouse; the Hapsburgs returned to rule. This single-page passport (Reise-Pass) bears all information about Israel Herzl, including name, character, birthplace, birth year, religion, stature, hair color etc. All signed by the Gov. & General Commander of the Serbian region of Timis, western Romania and Banate, Southern Hungary. Finely printed in large format (about 9x16 inches) in blue with a decorative border. Document dated 1850, sealed with signed revenue stamp. Theodore (Tivadar/Binyamin Ze'ev) Herzl was born in Pest (the other side of Buda - Hungary), his family had come from Zemun (present day Serbia, by Belgrade on the Danube). But Herzl was a common name, so it could be a relative or not.

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MAJOR AUCTION OF ISRAEL AND JUDAIC NUMISMATICS TO BE HELD JANUARY 28-29, 2014

For decades, AINA Life Member Sam Rosen acquired one or more of each coin issued by the Israel Coins and Medals Corporation, as well as some medals and sets of ancient Judaeen coins. Similarly, AINA Life Member David Gursky bought every coin and medal issued by the IGCNC plus other Judaica medals, pins, etc.

The Rosen and Gursky families have consigned these important collections of Israel and Judaic Numismatics to Goldberg Auctioneers, long time AINA supporters, for their January Pre-Long Beach Auction, held in Los Angeles. The lot descriptions will soon be available at www.goldbergcoins.com, and catalogs can be obtained by calling (310) 551-2646.




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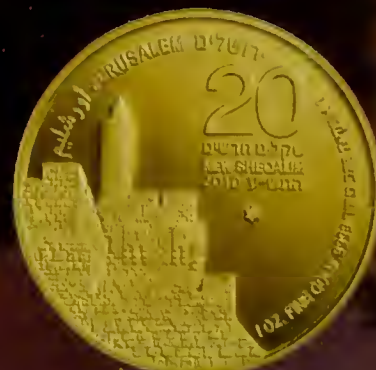
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SYLVIA HAFFNER MAGNUS



THE 'FIRST LADY' OF MODERN ISRAEL NUMISMATICS FEATURED ON AINA'S 2014 MEDAL

All Life Members and paid-up AINA 2014 members will receive a free medal honoring Sylvia Haffner Magnus.

The obverse was designed by Paul Conner, and the reverse AINA logo was created by Nathan Sobel.

While living in California, Sylvia authored the groundbreaking reference work *History of Modern Israel's Money from 1917 to 1967*.

This book included the coins and currency issued under the British Mandate of Palestine.

A later edition included Turkish and Egyptian Money used in the Holyland. She was awarded the American Nu-

mismatic Association's Heath Literar Award in recognition of her exceptional work.

Sylvia lived in Israel for several years where she did the research for "Judaic Tokens and Medals," which was and published by AINA in 1978 (edited by Nathan Sobel).

This important reference was the culmination of Sylvia's efforts to list and photograph kibbutz scrip, merchant and co-operative tokens, city and municipality medals, Masonic and Arab medals and tokens, etc.

Sylvia served on the AINA board and wrote numerous articles over the years that appeared in the Shekel. ☐

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HOLY MOSES!

BY MEL WACKS

The prophet, lawgiver and religious leader Moses is depicted on medals throughout the world, most recently, on the Jewish-American Hall of Fame's 44th medal honoring Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Her portrait is featured on the obverse, while the reverse shows an image of Moses wearing a frieze and holding the Ten Commandments. Engraved in the exergue is a quote from Ginsburg: THE DEMAND FOR JUSTICE RUNS THROUGH THE ENTIRETY OF THE JEWISH TRADITION.



Moses ("Moishe" in Hebrew) is described in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* as "towering above the



THE DEMAND
FOR JUSTICE RUNS
THROUGH THE ENTIRETY
OF THE JEWISH
TRADITION



Rays emanate from Moses' head on the reverse of the 2013 Jewish-American Hall of Fame medal commemorating Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, sculpted by Eugene Daub (49 x 47mm).

galaxy of great men and women in the Bible who made a distinctive contribution to Jewish history and culture." He was "the father of the prophets and Israel's first Jewish leader, [and] he gave Israel the Torah—a law of justice, holiness, and loving-kindness." As such,

Continued

FIRST MEDAL WITH MOSES, C. 1535



Image courtesy

American Numismatic Society

This copper-nickel medal by Hans Reinhart the Elder, c. 1535, is thought to be the first medal to depict Moses. (50.8mm).

Continued

it is little wonder that Moses has been portrayed on more medals over the centuries than any other Jewish figure. Described here are some notable examples.

Perhaps the first piece to depict Moses was designed by the great German medalist Hans Reinhart, the Elder, c. 1535.

The obverse features Moses and the Burning Bush, and bears a Latin inscription that translates “The Lord speaks to Moses from the Bush, and sends him to Pharaoh.”

Daniel Friedenbergs’s book *Jewish Medals from the Renaissance to the Fall of Napoleon, 1503-1815*, indicates that “[Reinhart’s] medals so inspired Central Europe, they led to the Joachimstahl coin type (also known as thalers) from

Bohemia.”

The Reinhart and Joachimstahl medals, as well as many other works of art created over the last five centuries, depict Moses with horns.

The reverse of Ginsburg’s medal shows rays emanating from Moses’ head. The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* explains this anomaly: “Two horns were shown [by Michaelangelo and others] protruding from his head, because the Latin (Vulgate) translation of the Bible used during the Middle Ages mistranslated the verb ‘sent forth beams’ as ‘horns’ in Exodus 34:35.”

Among the earliest medals depicting Moses was created by Hieronymus Magdeburger and his school after 1535.

The obverse inscription MO-ISE (the Hebrew equivalent appears

Continued

FALSE DEPICTIONS ON EARLY MEDALS



Images courtesy www.historam.com

Moses by Hieronymus Magdeburger and school (ND), after 1535, in pewter (37mm).

Continued

on Moses' collar) is split by the left-facing portrait that features curled ram's horns. Inscribed below the portrait is EX 15. Surrounding the profile is a German inscription that translates "The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation."

The reverse displays the second commandment in Hebrew, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" plus EXODUS Z9 in a box. Surrounding the square is the second commandment in German.

A crudely cast bronze Joachimstahl medal surfaced in a 2008 auction conducted by Ira and Larry Goldberg. The piece incorrectly depicted Moses with horns. The second commandment in Hebrew appears on the reverse.

One of the most historic pieces featuring Moses, the Sanhedrin medal was produced by France in 1806, and has been restruck in bronze and silver many



Images courtesy Goldberg Auctions.
Joachimstahl bronze medal, crudely cast around the 17th century (33mm).

Continued

GRAND SANHEDRIN MEDAL



Images courtesy www.historama.com

The 1806 Sanhedrin medal commemorates the first convening of the Grand Sanhedrin, the ancient Jewish religious supreme court, in more than 1,500 years. The obverse depicts a mature Napoleon in uniform facing right, with the French legend translating “Napoleon Emperor and King,” and the designer and mint director’s names below. The reverse shows a horned and barefoot Moses bowing before Napoleon and the Ten Commandments; the exergue legend reads GRAND SANHEDRIN XXX.MAI MDCCCVI.

Continued

times by the Monnaie de Paris.

The specimen commemorates the first convening of the Grand Sanhedrin, the ancient Jewish religious supreme court, in over 1,500 years.

Napoleon needed Jews to bolster the ranks of his armies, but was constrained by their Kosher dietary laws, so the Sanhedrin reached an agreement whereby Jews fighting in the French armies would be relieved of their dietary restrictions in exchange for religious freedom and state protection in the French empire.

The obverse depicts a mature Napoleon in uniform facing right, with the French legend translating

“Napoleon Emperor and King,” and the designer and mint director’s names below. The reverse shows a horned and barefoot Moses bowing before Napoleon and the Ten Commandments; the exergue legend reads GRAND SANHEDRIN XXX.MAI MDCCCVI.

The Thomason Medallion Bible, produced in Birmingham, England, by Sir Edward Thomason, is a set of 60 medals struck in 1830 that were inspired by the works of well-known Renaissance artists and executed by several different engravers. Some of the medals found in this collection are: “Moses Discovered & Preserved by the Daughter of King Pharaoh”; “The Rod of Moses Miraculously

Continued

MEDALS WORLDWIDE DEPICT MOSES



Images courtesy www.medalcollectors.org

Part of a 60-medal set created by Sir Edward Thomason in 1830, this piece shows Moses as he “smote the rock” (73mm).

Continued

Changed into a Serpent”; and “Moses Smote the Rock and it Gush’d Out Water.”

To view more in this series, consult the *Collector’s Guide* at the Medal Collectors of America website, www.medalcollectors.org.

Among the most impressive, contemporary art medals portraying Moses are very high-relief pieces by Elizabeth Weistrop. They were minted in bronze and fine silver in 1965 by Medallic Art Company.

Art medals depicting Moses have been produced by countries throughout the world, from Portugal and Switzerland to China.

The prophet appeared on Israel’s 2005 gold 10 sheqalim. The piece received “Most Inspirational Coin” honors in *World Coin News*’ annual Coin of the Year competition.

The 2013 Ginsberg medal brings the Moses design tradition full circle, combining the legacy of ancient and modern law.

When Justice Ginsberg received the Albert D. Chernin Award from the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, she proclaimed “I am a judge, born, raised, and proud of being a Jew.” It is fitting that Moses, privileged to receive the Torah (Jewish Law), is displayed on the 2013 Ginsburg medal.

Ginsburg joins two other Supreme Court Justices honored by the Jewish-American Hall of Fame—Louis Dembitz Brandeis (1971) and Benjamin Nathan Cardozo (1987). For more information, visit www.amuseum.org/jahf or call 818-225-1348. □

Reprinted with permission from “The Numismatist,” October 2013.



IMAGES OF MOSES

ABOVE: A contemporary high-relief medal by Elizabeth Weistrop depicts Moses speaking to the Israelites while holding tablets (37mm).

RIGHT: Israel's 2005 gold 10 sheqalim coin was named "Most Inspirational Coin of the Year" (30mm). Photo courtesy of Israel Coins and Medals.



BELOW: Moses confronts Israelites and the golden calf on a medal issued in 1982 in Portugal by E. Vaz.



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- First time mint designer Rocky Zhao collaborates with his father, Qiming Zhao, the legendary engraver of Chinese paper money and stamps.



Rocky Zhao and Qiming Zhao present 92 year old Gary Matzdorff with etched set #39 in China. In 1939, Gary was fortunate to escape Germany and find refuge in Shanghai. In 1948, he settled in America.

Commemorating the 70th anniversary of the forceful relocations of \approx 18,000 European Jewish WWII refugees by the occupying Japanese into a restricted area, The Shanghai Ghetto.

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A TRUE VISIONARY

SEYMOUR FROMER: GODFATHER OF THE JEWISH-AMERICAN HALL OF FAME



BY MEL WACKS

In 1968, I was living in Sacramento, California, and working at Beale Air Force Base on the top-secret SR-71 “Blackbird,” an advanced, long-range, Mach 3+ strategic reconnaissance aircraft. Even my wife didn’t know what I was working on.

One day, we visited the California Fair and I noticed a large menorah in one of the exhibits. It indicated that it was loaned by the Judah L. Magnes Museum in Berkeley, about 90 miles away. So

Inset: Seymour Fromer at the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Magnes Museum. Above: The Lockheed SR-71 “Blackbird” reconnaissance aircraft.

a few weeks later, we decided to visit. Walking through the museum we chanced to meet a man, who started a conversation with me. I told him that I was a numismatist and said that I was sorry that I didn’t see any coins on display. He asked me if I would like to be the Numismatic Consultant to the Magnes Museum, and I answered

Continued

CHANCE ENCOUNTER SPARKS ENDEAVOURS



An early photo of Seymour Fromer at the entrance to the Magnes Museum. Fromer holds open the gate designed by noted sculptor Victor Ries.

Continued

that I would love to.

I had no idea with whom I was speaking, and so the next day I called the museum and asked who Seymour Fromer was. They told me he was the Director of the Magnes Museum.

And so I became the museum's Numismatic Consultant. The first thing I did was produce and sell Wooden Shekels picturing the museum.

My dad helped me, and we ultimately made a profit of several hundred dollars. This sum plus an additional \$500 donated by Julian Levin, a member of the local Israel Coin Club that I had started, was the total capitalization for the

Jewish-American Hall of Fame series of medals that I launched in 1969.

Seymour Fromer suggested that Victor Ries, who was Artist in Residence at the Magnes Museum, design our first medal—and the rest is history.

Seymour later recommended other sculptors, who had had shows at the Magnes Museum, to design medals. And so, Professor Robert Russin produced one of our most loved medals—for Albert Einstein—and others, and Jacques Schnier produced his only other numismatic commemorative besides the 1936 Bay Bridge commemorative half dollar.

Continued

FROMER SUGGESTS SCULPTORS FOR MEDALS



Wooden shekels were the first medal produced for the Magnes Museum.

Continued

I always bounced ideas off of Seymour for his sage advice. We became good friends, together with my wife Esther and his wife Rebecca. Rebecca, together with Seymour, founded the Magnes Museum, and was a distinguished poet and historian.

Once, Seymour caught an error just before medals were to be struck. Adolph Ochs, the publisher of the New York Times, had his name misspelled as “Adolf.” We managed to stop the presses, and have the models changed.

Seymour passed away in 2009, and Rebecca in 2012. It was a great pleasure to work with Joel Iskovitz to produce the “Fromer Scholar at the Magnes” award, that will help perpetuate the intelligence, humor, and hard work of both Seymour



Plaster model of the Jewish-American Hall of Fame medal honoring Adolph Ochs, with name misspelled ADOLF S. OCHS (top), and the corrected spelling on medal (above).

Continued

UC SCHOLARSHIP HONORS FROMERS



The Fromer Scholar at the Magnes UC Berkeley medal, sculpted by noted numismatic artist Joel Iskowitz from a design concept by Mel Wacks. Their initials are on the obverse.

Continued

and Rebecca Fromer.

The Fromer Scholar Medal will be presented annually by the Seymour and Rebecca Fromer Scholarship Fund to a student at UC Berkeley in good academic standing, who is pursuing studies in the fields of Jewish history, culture, art, literature, ethnography, or other subject areas related to the history and culture of the Jewish people.

The recipients of the scholarship will be known as “Fromer Scholars at the Magnes” and they will be given special opportunities for research and study at the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life at UC Berkeley.

The Fund was established by friends of the Magnes Museum in order to recognize the leadership of Seymour and Rebecca Fromer, who in establishing the Magnes Museum, did so much to honor and

preserve the history of the Jewish people of California and the West.

These medals have been designed and sculpted by one of America’s leading coin and medal designers—Joel Iskowitz—based on the original concepts of Mel Wacks.

Both of their initials are featured on the obverse - above the “R” in “SCHOLAR.”

The medal captures the warmth and intelligence of the Fromers, and has the appearance of a fine woodcut. The reverse of the medal depicts a 3rd-6th century C.E. stone menorah relief found in Syria, and has a large area where the name of the recipient can be inscribed.

Among Joel’s more than two dozen designs appearing on United States coins are the 2009 reverses for the Lincoln Bicentennial cent “Professional Life in Illinois” and the District of Columbia “Duke El-

Continued

FROMER'S INFLUENCE EXTENSIVE



Seymour Fromer at the 25th anniversary exhibition of the Judah L. Magnes Museum.

Continued

lington” quarter dollar.

Joel Iskowitz’s initials “JI” can be seen to the left of “ONE.”

In addition to the 2 ¼” bronze Fromer Scholar Medal that will be draped around the recipient’s neck each year, an extremely small quantity of just 65 serial numbered pieces will be minted and given to patrons who contribute \$65 to fund their production.

If you would like to help and obtain a medal, send your contribution to the Jewish-American Hall of Fame, 5189 Jeffdale Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91364, or call (818) 225-1348. □



Joel Iskowitz designed the Fromer Scholar at the Magnes Medal shown previously. Among the more than two dozen designs of Joel Iskowitz appearing on U.S. coins is the reverse of the 2009 Lincoln Bicentennial cent, “Professional Life in Illinois,” above.

A.I.N.A. MARKETPLACE



The Pennsylvania Association of Numismatists (PAN) is a non-profit educational state organization founded in 1978 consisting of individuals and coin clubs throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States.

PAN membership is open to any individual or club interested in the study and collection of coins, currency, medals, tokens, and related material. The cost is \$12 per calendar year (clubs are free). You will receive our journal, *The Clarion* published three times per year and the PAN eNEWS, a free electronic newsletter.

PAN Coin Shows and Conventions occur every spring in early May and fall in late October at the Monroeville Convention Center, 209 Mall Blvd, Monroeville, PA 15146. There are more than 130 tables and 100 dealers eager to buy, sell, or trade coins, paper money, tokens, medals, gold, silver, and bullion.

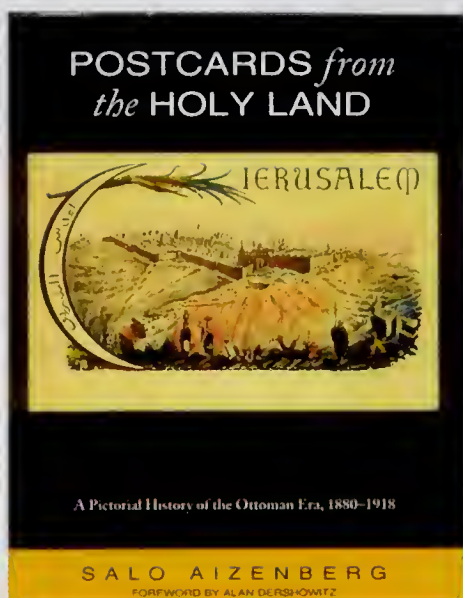
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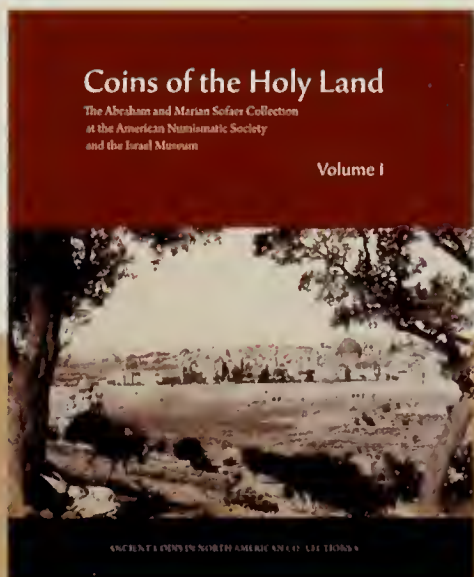
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The journal, **The Israel Philatelist**, is published 6 times a year.

www.israelphilatelist.com



Coins of the Holy Land:

The Abraham and Marian Sofaer Collection at the American Numismatic Society and the Israel Museum

American Numismatic Society Publications



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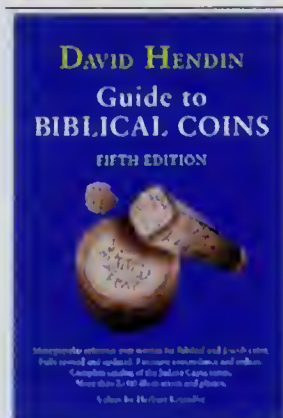
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The book was written by Ya'akov Meshorer with Gabriela Bijovsky and Wolfgang Fischer-Bossert, and edited by David Hendin and Andrew Meadows.

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BEYOND THE DEAD SEA Scrolls



Coin discoveries unveil Essene history of Qumran

BY MARVIN TAMEANKO

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 was the most astounding archaeological event of the 20th century. These ancient scrolls have an enormous appeal to the popular imagination and whenever they are exhibited in museums, people line up in the thousands to view them.

The collection eventually consisted of about 900 documents and fragments, written in Hebrew, Aramaic and a few in Greek. Some were found in 1947 and more in the following years, inside 11 caves

A section of the Isaiah Scroll, the most important of the Dead Sea Scrolls, labelled as 1QIsa), written before the 2nd century BCE, and found in 1947. A silver tetradrachm of Antiochus VIII of the type found at the site of the discovery of the scrolls, Qumran.

located on the western shore of the Dead Sea, near the ancient settlement of Khirbet (Ruins) Qumran, now located in the West Bank but originally in the British Mandate territory of Palestine. And of course, there are hoards of coins associated with these spectacular finds.

Continued

FIRST STUDIES OF SITE NOT ACCURATE

Continued

The Dead Sea Scrolls, written in the years between 200 BCE and CE 50, were first believed to be the work of an ancient Jewish religious sect, the Essenes, but this is disputed by scholars today. They claim that some of the scrolls were from an Essene archive but others were brought to Qumran by people fleeing the Roman invasion of Judaea, in CE 66 to 70. For scholarly

purposes, the scrolls were divided into three categories, the first consisting of texts from the Hebrew Bible such as the book of Isaiah.

The oldest scroll found in the hoard was a Book of Samuel written in the 3rd century BCE.

The second body of documents contained the apocryphal chapters not included in the Bible, such as the Books of Enoch, Jubilees, and the non-canonical psalms.

The third group was made up of the sectarian scrolls written by the Essenes, including the "Rule of the Community," a listing of the rules of behaviour for the members of the sect.

Another sectarian document, "The



An imagined portrait of an Essene from the 1493 document, the Nuremberg Chronicles.

Scroll of the War Between the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness," often called the "War Scroll," recounted a judgment-day war to destroy evil.

The Essene bundle of scrolls also contained the famous Copper or "Treasure Scroll," actually two scrolls, containing a fictional but detailed description of 64 hiding places of the treasury of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Many theories about the Scrolls, the Essenes and the town of Qumran have been published over the past 60 years but recent research proved the Scrolls were a wartime, emergency deposit of books that, fortunately for scholars, reflected the religious and political history of Judaea in the first centuries of the Common Era.

This was a very interesting period for historians because it encompassed the birth, life and death of Jesus, and bridged the literary gap between the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.

Remarkably, the many ancient coins recovered in Qumran, or

Continued

SCROLLS' HISTORY GRADUALLY UNVEILED

Continued

inside the caves where the Scrolls were hidden, also reflected this history. As these coins serve as imperishable records of the times, it would be interesting to examine them as adjuncts to the Dead Sea Scrolls, and see if they shed new light on their meaning and importance.

The prelude to the story of the Dead Sea Scrolls begins in 168 BCE, during the Judaeen revolt against their Seleucid (Syrian-Greek) overlord and oppressor, King Antiochus IV. Led by the Hasmonean leader Judas Maccabeus, the Jews won several skirmishes against the Syrians and in 164 BCE attained a small measure of political independence. In 142 BCE, commanded by Simon Maccabeus, the Jews resumed their war with Syria's king, Antiochus VII, and obtained full religious freedom.

This event is described in the Apocrypha of the Bible, 1 and 2 *Maccabees*, and it is still celebrated today in the Jewish festival of Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights. The families of the Jewish high priests had collaborated with the Seleucids so they were deposed and the Maccabean kings usurped the position and title of High Priest.

With the removal of the traditional priestly class, two new major religious parties arose in Judaea, the Sadducees and the Pharisees, and

also several small religious cults. The best known of these minor parties was the Essenes, a sect that pursued a reclusive life style of self discipline. The two major religious parties held opposing theological beliefs with the Sadducees interpreting the scriptures literally and devoting themselves to the prescribed rituals of worship in the Temple of Jerusalem.

In principle, the Sadducees denied the concept of the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body and the existence of angels. The Pharisees were a more humane sect who accepted the emerging oral laws as fully equal to scripture, believed that there was an afterlife, that the dead would be resurrected, and that angels existed. The Essenes chose not to participate in this competition of beliefs and withdrew into asceticism.

Also, the Sadducees and the Pharisees constantly fought each other for political influence in Judaea by supporting either the king or his opponents in the palace rivalries. The Essenes, a very small group, avoided any outward involvement in Politics but participated in the squabbles when it suited their interests.

All these religious parties perished when the Romans conquered Judaea and destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70 but the core, humanist

Continued

KEY COINS FOUND AT QUMRAN SITE

Continued

philosophy of the Pharisees was preserved by a school of teachers (rabbis) and it became the root of modern-day Judaism and an important influence in early Christianity.

Even though they were only a minor sect the Essenes were well known for their monastic life style and were first mentioned in ancient literature by Philo of Alexandria, writing in CE 20-54. (*Every Good Man is Free*, XII, 75).

He said the Essenes numbered only about 4,000, they loved God, were pacifists, pious and honest, lived celibate lives in communal settlements, practiced baptism, and strictly observed the Sabbath.

Other authors described the Essenes as a celibate community, practicing ritual immersion, giving generously to charity and prohibiting personal property and expressions of anger. Because these practices resembled some of the customs of the early Christians, and because the Essenes often referred to themselves as the “Members of The Way,” as did early Christians, several scholars had proposed that they were the spiritual predecessors of the Christians and that, at some time, both John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth were members of this sect. There is no concrete proof for this theory and it is doubtful.

Archaeologists believed that Qumran was founded on the shore



*Images courtesy Goldberg Coins
A shekel of Tyre struck between 126 BCE
and CE 65, similar to the type found at
Qumran.*

of the Dead Sea sometime before the reign of the Maccabean king, John Hyrcanus I (134-104 BCE), but gave several conflicting reasons for the establishment of this desert settlement.

After the discovery of the Scrolls, it was proposed that Qumran was a monastic place of refuge for an Essene community of about 50 to 200 adherents. Later it was sug-

Continued

QUMRAN COIN HOARDS HISTORIC

Continued

gested that Qumran was probably a secular port and trade centre on the Dead Sea. Then it was claimed that Qumran was a factory town making pottery, or an agricultural estate belonging to a wealthy person, or perhaps a military outpost controlling the nearby trade routes.

However, by examining the graves in the cemeteries and the artifacts recovered, archaeologists proved that a large Essene community did live in Qumran.

Furthermore, it was confirmed that the town was occupied up until about CE 73 when it was destroyed by the Roman legions before they attacked the Jewish rebels in their last stronghold in the mountaintop fortress of nearby Masada.

When first threatened by the Roman invasion in AD 66, the Essenes in Qumran apparently assembled all the sacred books in their possession, and all the books brought to them by refugees fleeing from the Romans, and hid them in the nearby caves.

In 1947 Arab shepherds searching for a lost sheep discovered these

scrolls in the hillside caves near Qumran.

The coins of the Seleucid kings reigning over Judaea in the 2nd century BC are the first numismatic footnotes to the story of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the

Essene sect and many Seleucid coins were found in the hoards recovered in Qumran.

Archaeologists digging in the ruins in 1955 discovered three ceramic pots filled with 561 silver coins, buried in the entrance to a large building. One of these three silver

hoards is now located in the Israel National Museum in Jerusalem and the other two are in the Jordanian Museum in Amman. In addition, during the following years 681 bronze coins were recovered from various locations in Qumran. In later excavations, eight silver coins and 36 bronze coins were found but these were deposited or lost after the destruction of the settlement in CE 73, and are believed to be irrelevant to the hiding of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Unfortunately, the cataloguing of the early finds was poorly performed and the identification of the

‘The coins of the Seleucid kings reigning over Judaea in the 2nd century BC are the first numismatic footnotes to the story of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Essene sect.’

Continued

SELEUCID COINS RELATED TO FOUNDING

Continued

coin types was inaccurate. Also, most of the bronze coins have now disappeared and only the researchers' brief field notes remain as sources for reconstructing the data.

The three pots of silver coins contained pieces dating from 146-8 BCE and, although first thought to be the accumulated, communal wealth of the settlement, hidden away from the invading Romans, archaeologists now believe that it was a "currency hoard" sent to Qumran by local authorities, some time after 8 BCE, for transshipment to Jerusalem.

The three pots contained numerous Seleucid coins, including shekels and half-shekels minted by the self-ruling city of Tyre, and six Roman Republic denarii.

Perhaps the earliest coin found in Qumran was a single bronze piece of the early Seleucid king, Antiochus III, the Great (223-287 BCE) but it may have been a stray or casual loss by a traveler and not significant to the history of the settlement.

However, a single didrachm of the later Seleucid king, Demetrius II (145-139 BCE), and four silver coins, two tetradrachms and two didrachms, struck for Antiochus VII (139-129 BCE), discovered in the silver hoards, have a direct bearing on the founding of Qumran and the story of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Antiochus VII was noted in history as a persecutor of the Jews but after being defeated by the Maccabeans, he had granted them religious freedom and the right to strike their own coinage. (1 Maccabees 15:6). However, Antiochus VII remained the political overlord of Judaea and his shekels found at Qumran were struck in the semi-autonomous cities of Tyre and Sidon.

These coins showed the idealized portrait of the king on the obverse and an eagle on the reverse.

It was only after Simon Maccabeus died that his son, the Hasmonean king and High Priest, John Hyrcanus I (135-104 BCE), took up the Seleucid offer to mint an autonomous coinage and struck the first Maccabean coins for Judaea. However, the Seleucids were still the overlords of Judaea and the Jews could only strike bronze denominations for use in the local markets, with the silver coinage being reserved for the Seleucids. So the Jews continued to use the Seleucid fine-silver shekels and half shekels of the city of Tyre, dated from 136 to 9 BCE especially to pay the Jerusalem Temple poll tax of a half shekel per person.

Because of this, historians initially proposed that the Qumran hoards of silver found in 1955, were the annual Temple taxes collected in the region. However,

Continued

QUMRAN'S COINS: OF HYRCANUS, OTHERS

Continued

this large a number of silver coins would have represented the taxes for a much larger population than could be supported by the Dead Sea desert settlements at that time. These Tyrian shekels show the head of Melqart, the Phoenician form of the Greek demigod Hercules, on the obverse and the Syrian royal eagle on the reverse.

Interestingly, coin collectors speculate that the shekels of Tyre were so common in Jerusalem in the first century that they were probably the coins used for the biblical “Thirty Pieces of Silver,” paid for the betrayal of Jesus.

To the delight of scholars, the 681 bronze coins found in Qumran were struck in almost all of the historical time periods of the settlement, from Syrian to Roman times, beginning with four coins struck for the Seleucid kings including Antiochus VII (139-129 BCE).

These were followed by coins struck for the Hasmonean king, John Hyrcanus I (135-104 BCE), who minted his own coins but also used the earlier bronze coins of his Syrian overlords. Among the bronze coins recovered were many struck by the other Jewish kings, for example, 145 specimens of Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BCE) and four of the last Maccabean king, Mattathias Antigonus (40-37 BCE). The Herodian dynasty that suc-



*Images courtesy Heritage Auctions
A prutah coin of John Hyrcanus I, 135-104 BCE; “The Wicked Priest” of the Essenes, similar to those found at Qumran, a settlement founded during his reign.*

ceeded the Hasmoneans was well represented with 16 coins of Herod I the Great (37-4 BCE), 16 pieces of Herod Archelaus (4 BCE to CE 6), and 84 coins of Herod Agrippa 1 (CE 37-44).

Roman governors took over Judaea following the Herodian period and 104 coins of eight of the 14

Continued

COINS OF ROMAN SOLDIERS FOUND

Continued

Roman governors, ruling from CE 6 to 66, were recovered.

Also found in the excavations were 91 coins of the First War of the Jews against Rome in CE 66-70. These coins were dated to Years Two and Three of the revolt. Finally, 24 autonomous city coin types, struck before CE 73 in Antioch, Ascalon, Caesarea, Canatha, Dora, Neapolis and Tyre, were recovered in Qumran.

The finding of such an abundance of coins probably proved that Qumran was not a monastic community, isolated from normal life, and that the Essenes may have participated in the trade and commerce of the Dead Sea region. In addition, but unrelated to the Dead Sea Scroll deposit, later excavations revealed six bronze coins of the Second Jewish Revolt against Rome in CE 132-135, four bronze coins of Nabatea, the Arab kingdom east of the Dead Sea, three coins of the Roman emperor Vespasian, three of Trajan, ten Late Roman coins, two Byzantine and six Arab or Turkish coins.

These coins were apparently lost in Qumran after its destruction by Roman soldiers garrisoned in the ruins after CE 73, and by Jewish refugees fleeing from the Second Revolt in CE 132, or by pilgrims passing by in the 4th to 5th centuries, and by Christian hermits living in the ruins of the town in the 6th

century Byzantine period, or by Muslim travellers in the 16th to 18th centuries.

Some of the earlier bronze coins can be used to illustrate and footnote the Dead Sea Scrolls, especially the Essene document known as the “War Scroll.” This document was written in the Maccabean period of 135 to 67 BCE, but included later additions that probably alluded to the Roman invasion of Judaea by Pompey the Great in 63 BCE and perhaps to the later rule of the Romans and Herod the Great in 37 BCE.

The personalities mentioned in this scroll were not clearly identified by the scribe but were given nicknames, probably to create a parable that could be applied to future figures and events. Scholars struggled to recognise these individuals and many suggested they were actually not historical characters but were fictional leaders who were expected to appear at the “End of Days.”

However, many researchers claim that the main figure in the narrative, the so-called “Teacher of Righteousness,” could only be the priest-leader and perhaps the founder of the Essene movement. His sworn enemy, “The Wicked Priest” in the document, was believed to be the Hasmonean king, John Hyrcanus I (135-104 BCE), who is known to

Continued

PRUTOT PLENTIFUL AT SITE

Continued

have refused the Essenes teachings and persecuted the sect. From the text, it seems that the leader of the Essenes came into direct conflict with the king and also with the leader of the Pharisees, and this hostility forced the Essenes into exile in the desert around the Dead Sea.

Other collective figures such as “The-Seekers-After-Smooth-Things,” cannot be identified but were probably thr wealthy, influential Pharisees who opposed the Essenes. The coin of John Hyrcanus I found in Qumran showed a double cornucopia framing a pomegranate on the reverse, both symbols of wealth, plentitude, and of the “smooth-things” in life. The obverse carried the royal legend in paleo-Hebrew script, surrounded by a laurel wreath and giving the king’s title as the “High Priest.” The king usurping this sacred title *may* be one of the reasons the Essenes made him their enemy and called him “The Wicked Priest.”

The person named in the War Scroll as “The Man of Lies” was supposedly the leader of the Pharisees who was critical of and also a persecutor of the Essenes. “The Wrathful Lion” in the text, also a great oppressor of the Essenes, was probably the warlike Maccabean king, Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BCE), a cruel ruler who also held



*Images courtesy Heritage Auctions
A prntah of Alexander Jannaeus, 103-76 BCE,
“The Wrathful Lion” of the Essenes, similar to
multiple coins found at Qumran.*

the position of High Priest and whose policy of conquering his pagan neighbors and converting them to Judaism by force was objectionable to the Essenes.

Reading between the lines, it appears that Jannaeus, a Hellenistic despot who killed many of his own people, may have been directly responsible for the death of the

Continued

COINS TRACED TO TEMPLE DESECRATION



A Roman Republic denarius of P. Aelius Paetus, struck c. 130-126 BCE, similar to the coin found in the silver hoard in Qumran.

Continued

Teacher of Righteousness. This created a crisis that diminished the influence of the Essenes and, being leaderless, they became easy prey for their enemies.

The most common coins of Jan-naeus found at Qumran showed an anchor, adopted from Seleucid coins, on the obverse to represent the king's enlarged maritime power after seizing the Syrian port cities. The obverse legend on these coins, in Greek letters, was "of King Alexander." The reverse showed a star indicating royalty, with the paleo-Hebrew legend "Yehonatar (Alexander) the King," inscribed between the star's rays.

After his death, Alexander Jan-naeus was succeeded by his more diplomatic wife Salome Alexandra (76-67 BCE) and attempted to ameliorate the constant conflict between the Pharisees and Sadducees.

To separate the secular from the religious duties of the Judaeen kings, she appointed her son John Hyrcanus II as High Priest and her other son Aristobulus II as commander of the army. After Salome died in 67 BCE, Aristobulus, with the aid of the Sadducees, attempted to depose his brother but failed. In their book, the Essenes commented on this and reported that the conflict had a negative effect on their cult because they had taken sides and supported John Hyrcanus II.

To end a disruptive civil war between the two brothers in 65 BCE, the Romans under Pompey the Great, invaded Judaea.

When the Romans conquered Jerusalem and desecrated the Temple in 63 BCE, many Jews fled to the desert settlements around the Dead Sea and the Essenes gave shelter to these refugees, perhaps incor-

Continued

TURMOIL OF RULE REFLECTED IN COINS

Continued

porating their religious books into Qumran's archives.

At this time, the Romans sent Aristobulus II and his family to Rome as hostages and appointed John Hyrcanus II as ruler and High Priest but also insisted that their military ally, Antipater, the father of Herod I, become his advisor and the governor of Judaea. With Hyrcanus II on the throne, persecution of the Essenes ceased and Roman Republic coinage began to circulate in the Dead Sea region.

Several Roman denarii, contemporary with the currency of Pompey the Great, were found in with the hoards of Tyrian silver coins buried in Qumran. One of these Roman Republic denarii was struck by the moneyer, P. Aelius Paetus (130-126 BCE). This coin showed the head of Roma on the reverse and the Dioscuri, the heavenly twins Castor and Pollux, a Roman national symbol, on the reverse.

Although Roman coins circulated in Judaea for the next 60 years, the Roman monetary system was officially imposed only in CE 6 and the denarius became the principal, silver currency. This was confirmed in the New Testament, *Matthew 22:19-21*, where a denarius, the so-called "Tribute Penny," was presented to Jesus for his judgment about paying taxes to Rome.

John Hyrcanus II ruled Judaea

with Antipater's and Roman help from 63 to 40 BCE. In 40 BCE Mattathias Antigonus, the youngest son of Aristobulus II, bribed Rome's perennial enemy, the Parthians, to invade Judaea and support his claim to the throne.

The Parthians pushed aside the Roman army, seized Jerusalem, took Hyrcanus II as a hostage and placed Antigonus on the throne. As the last of the Maccabean kings, Antigonus supported a return to the more traditional Jewish religion and therefore, was supported by the Essenes but in 37 BCE the Romans defeated and executed Antigonus, forced the Parthians out of Judaea, and made Herod their client king of Judaea.

With the death of Antigonus, the Essenes lost their last royal supporter and many adherents retreated into the desert. They may have brought the rare coins struck by Mattathias Antigonus to Qumran because several were recovered in excavations.

These coins were a wartime emergency issue, made of a heavily leaded, bronze alloy, and they displayed a double cornucopia, a sign of wealth with the inscription, "Mattatayah (Mattathias) the High Priest and Council of the Jews." The reverse was engraved with a wreath of ivy surrounding the Greek inscription, "of King Antigo-

Continued

SYMBOLS IMPORTANT IN ANCIENT JUDAEA

Continued
nus.”

The Herodian kings oppressed the Essene because of their earlier support for Antigonus and the cult lost many of its members. At that time, the Essenes may have updated their book about the war of the “Sons of Light” (the Essenes), against the “Sons of Darkness” (the Herodians and Romans), because they saw Herod as a Roman puppet and a foreign or pagan influence.

By this time, the Herodian monarchs adopted Hellenistic ideals and customs and became cruel, oriental kings, often at war with their own families and citizens.

This may be confirmed by some of the coins of Herod found in Qumran showing a pagan, ceremonial tripod on the obverse with a Greek legend stating, “of King Herod.” The reverse of the coin showed the helmet or headdress of the king surmounted by a royal star and palm fronds to celebrate his victory over his enemies. The images on this coin violated Jewish sensitivity to pagan symbolism and represented a turn to Hellenism in Judaea.

The suppression of minority religious sects continued under the later Herodian kings and, after the tumultuous reigns of Herod’s heirs, the Romans in CE 6 divided Herod’s remote domains amongst his descendants and annexed Judaea



Bronze coin of Mattathias Antigonus, 40-37 BCE, showing the double cornucopia and ivy wreath, similar to the coins found in Qumran.

proper to the province of Syria.

This placed the Jews under the administration of Roman governors, prefects, procurators or praetors, and the coins they struck became the circulating currency. From CE 6 to 66, 14 Romans governed Judaea and their main task was to collect the taxes, of which they received a large percentage, and to suppress

Continued

VIOLATION OF SYMBOLS SPARKS UNREST



The ceremonial tripod on the obverse of this eight prutot of Herod, and the helmet on the reverse with its surmounted palm frond and royal star violated Jewish sensibility to pagan symbolism as well as representing a return to Hellenism in Judaea.

Continued

dissent and rebellion.

The prefects corrupted and alienated the Judaeans priests, and Pontius Pilate, the fifth Roman prefect who officiated at the condemnation and crucifixion of Jesus, was typical of the greedy and cruel officials who governed Judaea. In CE 66 the last procurator, Gessius Florus, attempted to plunder the Temple in Jerusalem to make up for a shortfall in taxes, and rebellion broke out. When the revolt was suppressed, Judaea became an impoverished, politically chaotic province, with bandits operating freely in the countryside.

In this unstable environment, the people revived their ancient Messianic vision and this set the stage for the appearance of numerous prophetic figures including John the

Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth.

Many of the Roman prefects and procurators were represented by the bronze coins found in Qumran.

These small denomination coins, called “prutahs” but also mentioned as “mites” in the New Testament, carried no images of living things, in deference to the Jews’ religious prohibition of graven images.

Typical of these was one of the 29 coins from Qumran, struck for Pontius Pilate, the prefect under Tiberius in CE 26-36.

This coin showed three ears of grain bound together on the obverse and a “simplum,” a libation ladle on the reverse.

The Greek legend on the obverse was “(of) Tiberius Caesar.” The reverse inscription stated “Julia (mother) of Cacsar,” and referred

Continued

FAMILIAR MITE TYPES ALSO FOUND



A type bronze prutah, sometimes called a mite, struck in CE 29 for the prefect Pontius Pilate, CE 26-36, and similar to those found in the excavations of Qumran.

Continued

to Tiberius' mother, Julia Livia, widow of Augustus, an influential person in Judaea who owned towns and large agricultural estates near Jericho.

The tiny community of Essenes was tolerated by the "good king" Agrippa I (CE 37-44), the last Jewish, Roman puppet to rule over Jerusalem and whose reign overlapped the governance of Judaea by the Romans appointed by Caligula and Claudius. Agrippa, the grandson of Herod I and his Hasmonean wife, Mariamne, was the king "Herod" who judged Jesus as mentioned in the Bible, *Acts 1-23*.

Agrippa had been a hostage in Rome and was befriended by the young prince Claudius. When Claudius became emperor (CE 41-54), he generously granted Agrippa the entire territory ruled over by

his forefathers. Agrippa I restored Jewish nationalism and traditional customs and settled some of the religious disputes that led to the persecution of minor sects.

The most common of the 78 coins of Agrippa found in Qumran is the prutah, struck for circulation in the lands occupied by his Jewish citizens. This coin showed an oriental canopy or umbrella with fringes that shielded the king from the sun and it became a royal symbol.

The obverse inscription of this coins stated, "of King Agrippa" in Greek. The reverse showed three stalks of grain to indicate the prosperity in Judaea produced by its agriculture.

By CE 66, the Jews could no longer endure the oppression of the brutal Roman officials and rebelled. The resulting First Jewish War

Continued

PRUTAH SHOWS ORIENTAL INFLUENCE

Continued

against Rome was a death blow to the already diminished Essene community and the few remaining members prepared for their end. They gathered up all the sacred books in the community, those written by their adherents and those brought to Qumran by refugees, placed them in ceramic jars and deposited them in the nearby caves.

Some of the Essenes joined with the rebellious Jews in Jerusalem and fought against the Romans even though violence was against their beliefs. Others fled to foreign lands and joined the diaspora communities in Egypt and Arabia but too few survived to sustain the sect and it soon disappeared.

The bronze coins struck during the First Jewish War, found in Qumran, typically showed on their obverses an ornate metal vessel or amphora and a paleo-Hebrew inscription giving the coin's date. The reverse showed a vine leaf surrounded by a hopeful legend, "(for) the Freedom of Zion."

These coins were made under wartime conditions and many were overstruck on coins of the Herodian kings or the Roman procurators. In many cases the under types can be clearly seen.

The few later coins found in Qumran are the final footnotes to the history of the settlement and the concealment of the Dead Sea



A bronze prutah of Agrippa I (CE 37-44), similar to those found in Qumran, showing the oriental parasol.

Scrolls. Two of these coins were struck in the city of Ascalon in CE 73, the year Qumran was totally destroyed by the Romans. Several of these same coins were found in nearby Masada, site of the final Jewish resistance, so they were believed to have belonged to Roman auxiliary soldiers conscripted from the non-Jewish population of

Continued

LATER COINS DATE AFTER QUMRAN FALL



Images courtesy Heritage Auctions

A bronze coin of Ascalon similar in design to those found in Qumran.

Continued
Ascalon.

The coins showed the city goddess, Tyche, (Fortune) on the obverse and a war galley on the reverse to indicate that Ascalon was a famous port city and military naval base. The date was given in the inscription by the Greek letters SOP, for 176 of the Ascalon era, that is CE 72-73.

Probably, the soldiers from Ascalon came to Qumran and Masada as besiegers and lost their coins in the ruins, leaving a physical memento of the last days of the Jewish war and a record of the first years the Dead Sea Scrolls were hidden.

The coins recovered in Qumran demonstrate that the story of the Dead Sea Scrolls began in 142 BCE, in the havoc of a successful war for liberty from Syrian tyrants, and ended in CE 73 in the carnage

of an unsuccessful war for freedom from Roman oppression.

This 215-year time period, from war to war, consisted of many events that were significant to the secular and religious history of the region.

In 1947, more than 18 centuries after some of them were written, the Scrolls were discovered in the caves near the Dead Sea, and these documents, the town of Qumran, and the Essenes, were restored to their proper places in history. ▢

The author's article first appeared in Coin Week. Reprinted with permission. For further reading: Lonnqvist, Kenneth and Minna, "The Numismatic Chronology of Qumran: Fact and Fiction," Numismatic Chronicle 166, 2006.

MODERN COINS,
MEDALS REFERENCE
DEAD SEA SCROLLS



A 1961 Israel state medal honors the Second Concours Biblique International, held in Jerusalem. The copper scroll is on the obverse; an oil lamp on the reverse. Below, the 1982 5-sheqalim gold coin depicts the Qumran site. Above images courtesy Goldberg Coins; below, ICMC.

The wide range of ancient coins found in the Qumran area dating to the era of the writing and placement of the Dead Sea Scrolls reveal and confirm much of the history of the region and the scrolls.

So important have the scrolls' discovery been that their impact is recognized two millenia later.

Numerous modern medals and coins, some of which are shown here, make reference to the scrolls and/or the Qumran site of their discovery.

The symbols on the modern coins are of ancient times and ancient referents. Their timelessness prevails.



Continued

MODERN COINS, MEDALS HONOR SCROLLS



Images courtesy Goldberg Coins

A 1965 Israel state silver medal honors the 1925 founding of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The reverse carries an image of a fragment of the Dead Sea Scrolls.



The latest “Jerusalem of Gold” 20 New Sheqalim gold coin, issued in May 2103, features the Shrine of the Book depository of the Dead Sea Scrolls and also shows an inscription from the Isaiah scroll.
(Image courtesy Israel Coins & Medals Corporation.)



A French medal, date uncertain, depicting the urns found at Qumran containing the Dead Sea Scrolls. Approximately 80mm diameter by 6mm. Bronze.

HERITAGE & HISTORY

THE CULTURAL EVOLUTION OF A NATION'S MONEY ON DISPLAY AT THE BANK OF ISRAEL



BY DR. HOWARD M. BERLIN

As I have family in Jerusalem and have been writing a book about the religious aspect of the Via Delorosa in the Old City, I frequently travel to Jerusalem and also renew my many numismatic acquaintances in Israel. One such friend is Dr. Rachel Barkay of the Bank of Israel (BOI).

The BOI has been the country's central bank since 1954, succeeding the Bank Leumi Le-Israel B.M. Its Jerusalem headquarters

*Photo by Dr. Howard M. Berlin
The headquarters of the Bank of Israel and
its Visitor Center in Jerusalem.*

are located in a broad complex among the major governmental buildings including the Knesset (parliament), Supreme Court, and the office of the Prime Minister, which is across the square.

A Mirror of Ancient and Modern Times

On one such visit, Dr. Barkay

Continued

DISPLAYS PRESENTED IN MANY LANGUAGES



Photo by Dr. Howard M. Berlin

View of the Visitor Center lobby with a three-case display about the coins of Jerusalem.

Continued

took me on a tour of the BOI's renovated numismatic exhibition.

The BOI Visitor Center, or in transliterated Hebrew *Merkaz Mevakrim shel Bank Yisra'el*, has an exhibition titled, "Money – A Mirror of Ancient and Modern Times" with 18 bilingual displays (Hebrew and English) and nine interactive computer screens.

The exhibition serves to familiarize the public with the Bank's main functions as the central bank and its contribution to Israel's economy, along with both a historical development of money in Israel and the reflection of Israel's heritage in the design of its banknotes and coins.

A visit is instructive and interesting, and incorporates three features:

- An exhibition of ancient coins, banknotes and coins issued from pre-State days to the present;
- Interactive stations which explain, by means of computer games, the functions of the BOI, the history of money, and the contribution of the central bank to the economy;
- Films on the development of the means of payment and the essential role of the Bank – the preservation of price stability.

***Gallery in the shape
of New Israel Shekel***

Presented in the shape of the

Continued

SHEKEL SYMBOL DESIGNED INTO DISPLAY



Photo by Dr. Howard M. Berlin

A view of the lower level gallery, which is in the shape of the currency symbol of the New Israel shekel, of the Bank of Israel Visitor Center.

Continued

currency symbol of the New Israel shekel (₪), the gallery's lower level shows the history of means of payment and the conduct of trade during various periods – from the pre-coin periods, via the invention of the first coins in the seventh century BCE up to the present day.

The exhibition focuses on coins in circulation in the Land of Israel through the centuries.

The visitor sees the first coins minted by the Lydians in western Asia Minor and coins from ancient Greece, the civilization that pioneered the widespread use of coins.

Alongside these are coins of the

Persian Empire – of kings of Persia and of Judaeen cities from the Persian period in the fourth century BCE. Ancient coins are shown in chronological order, from the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods to the Ottoman era, with emphasis on Jewish coins from the Hasmonaean and Herodian periods, and from the time of the Jewish rebellion against Rome and of the Bar Kokhba war.

Alongside the ancient coins are two hoards, one found in the wreck of a sunken vessel, and the other, the savings of a wealthy inhabitant of Maresha, unearthed in archaeological excavations near

Continued

MODERN COINS BASED ON ANCIENTS

Continued

Beth Govrin.

The exhibition also displays all of Israel's banknotes and coins from the British Mandate period to the present day.

Next to each coin is a photo of an ancient coin on which the motif of the modern coin is based.

All modern Israel coins, from the very first mintage in 1948, are modeled after ancient Jewish coins or other Jewish archeological artifacts.

Emergency Money

A separate display presents emergency money printed in Jerusalem by the British Mandate Government in the early 1940s.

Visitors can see examples of trial print runs and original artwork for banknotes that were never put into circulation (and subsequently destroyed). These are specimens of the only banknotes ever printed in Jerusalem.

The exhibition covers various other topics, such as money substitutes used in ancient and contemporary civilizations. Many of the 400 items in the exhibition are exclusive to the BOI collection.



Photo by Dr. Howard M. Berlin

Part of a display showing examples of coins during Hasmonian Rule and those of Alexander the Great and the Tyrian shekel of the early Hellenistic Period.

Visitor's Checklist

Unfortunately, the BOI headquarters, like most other venues, requires heightened security as a facet of daily life in Israel.

First, prior registration is required, which can be done on-line at: www.bankisrael.gov.il/vcenter/visitRequest_en.php.

Second, you will need to bring your passport with you and pass through metal detectors.

The museum, at 2 Kaplan Street,

Continued

UNIQUE NOTES, ARTWORK SHOWN



Photo by Dr. Howard M. Berlin

A display at the Bank of Israel Visitor Center featuring original artist illustrations and other original artwork that went into the design of one of Israel's early banknotes.

Continued

Giv'at Ram, is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday-Thursday, and is closed Friday through Sunday and on all Jewish religious and national holidays. Admission is free.

The BOI Visitor Center can be reached using public transportation on the Egged 9, 24, and 28 bus lines. The BOI visitor center's web site is: www.bankisrael.gov.il/vcenter/default_en.html (also in Hebrew) and it may be contacted via e-mail at mevakrim@boi.gov.il (*mevakrim* is Hebrew for "visitor").

The Archeology Wing of the Israel Museum is nearby at 10 Ruppin Blvd. It has an outstanding array of ancient coins on display under the leadership of Dr. Haim Gitler from its archives and a visit there is strongly recommended. 📌

Dr. Howard Berlin, aka the "Numismatourist," frequently writes about his travels to museums having numismatic exhibits. He is also the author of "The Coins and Banknotes of Palestine Under the British Mandate, 1927-1947."

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MENTOR: ART GERSHMAN

TEACHING JEWISH COINS TO SCHOOL CHILDREN

BY ART GERSHMAN

For the past twenty years or so, I have taught Jewish coins to first graders in the Religious School of our synagogue, Beth El Hebrew Congregation of Alexandria, Virginia.

Our congregation has about 700 family units and the class of first graders is generally around 20 children. The class is divided into two sections. Children go to school on Sunday, from 10 a.m. to noon.

My teaching program is part of a larger program called Family Education Day, or Centers Day.

In Centers Day, all children, together with their parents, attend a unified session for the two-hour school day. The entire group, comprising generally about 40 to 60 people, is split up into four smaller groups and, *ad seriatum* go to one of four “centers.”

The four centers that we use are Israeli cooking, Israeli dance, genealogy, and my center, Jewish coins.

Why Jewish and not Israeli coins? In addition to the lively Israeli series I also bring in ancient Jewish coin-



Art Gershman with a class of youngsters as he teaches them about the history and importance of Jewish coins.

age, which I let them touch for a “special” treat.

Here’s my *modus operandi*. First, I give a brief talk about the coins. I ask questions such as why are there no presidents on the circulating coins but only non-human objects such as a menorah, a harp or palm tree (no graven images), what are the denominations on the coins, and what are the languages on the coins (Hebrew, Arabic, and English).

I always make it a point to explain that one in every five people in Israel is an Arab, and we must learn to get along with our Arab neighbors to have peace.

Continued

YOUNGSTERS LEARN HISTORY FROM COINS

Continued

To introduce the class to the Israeli coins I distribute Israeli mint sets, which are conveniently secured and presented by the holders from the Israeli mint.

Also during my talk I pass around sheets of 20 2x2 coin flips with various modern Israeli commemoratives.

This can be a little dangerous since someone always points out the effigy of Ben Gurion and challenges me on the “graven image” paradigm I have set up.

I then have to explain the difference between commemorative and circulating coinage, but it somehow always seems a little hollow. (I would be interested in any comments by the reader on this rubric.)

One popular piece is the holed telephone token. The parents always get a kick out of explaining the rotary dial to their kids.

After that I have several activities which they can do in a hands-on way. The most popular activity is when I send them on an “archaeological expedition.” I take my “junk box” coins and “salt” them with Israeli coins. I spread my junk-box coins out on a large baking sheet, borrowed from the temple kitchen. The children then get to comb through the coins and select an Israeli coin to take home with them. For practical reasons, I limit the coins taken home to one per customer. An additional activity is a coloring

project. On a regular sheet of blank paper I have drawn two large, blank circles. One is labelled heads, and the other is labelled tails. (Remember, we are dealing with first graders.) The top of the sheet is labelled “My Jewish Coin”. I supply plenty of crayons and magic markers. Some of the coins created are quite imaginative!

The final activity is my show and tell of the ancient coins. One example of the ancient Jewish coins I use is a bronze prutah of Agrippa I, 41-42 CE.

This coin has a sheaf of three wheat stalks on the reverse and a canopy on the obverse. I compare this coin with a few wheat cents I have and a modern Israeli coin which also has three wheat stalks.

This year I plan to bring in a silver Bar Kokhba zuz which I acquired at the ANA convention in Chicago this summer.

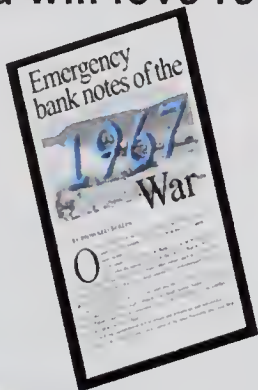
Before concluding this article, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of Barry Smith, director of the Beth El Religious School, first-grade teacher Carol Ann Cohen, and my wife, Bobbie Gershman, who conceived and first implemented the program.

Why don't you get involved with your temple's Religious School?

I can guarantee the hard work you put in will pay off in a greater sense of satisfaction as a coin collector, and friend of Israel. ☐

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